

## Call for Session Proposals Guide

**The Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU)** is a member-based nonprofit championing better design of cities and towns to improve lives and strengthen communities for all. For over thirty years, CNU has been the leading organization in reforming city-building across the country, gathering the broad spectrum of practitioners and advocates who share our mission. CNU is dedicated to making the design of cities, towns, and neighborhoods a part of how we respond to complex societal challenges, realizing their full potential to expand the social, economic, and environmental opportunities available to all members of each community. By highlighting effective design principles and lowering barriers to change, CNU amplifies the grassroots power of our thousands of members to build and rebuild their communities in ways that improve sustainability, increase accessibility, and promote equity.

The practice of New Urbanism is based on the belief that the built environment is capable of offering profound social, economic, and environmental benefits. Built on the principles of our Charter, New Urbanism is more than a set of design guidelines or policy recommendations. It is an intersectional way of practicing urbanism - *of building community* - that requires policy, design, and development to all play a role in achieving our shared vision for the future.

The annual Congress is an international gathering of our multidisciplinary cohort, but it is also a core programmatic effort of CNU, providing an opportunity for our attendees to convene, to educate, and to collaborate in service of a world where cities, towns, and neighborhoods are intentionally designed to foster community, preserve the natural environment, and improve the lives of all people.

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### About CNU 33 New England at Providence

New England is home to some of our country's oldest urbanism - villages, towns, and cities that have evolved through centuries of change: From economic peaks and valleys, periods of population growth and decline, and the demands of housing driven by shifting industries. Now, the region faces critical challenges as the increasingly severe impacts brought on by a changing climate lap at the shores of coastal communities and threaten flooding of inland waterways. CNU 33 will allow attendees to examine how the region has adapted, explore the values of interdependence and community, and establish a hopeful vision for the future based on the power of New Urbanist solutions.

The central stage for this Congress will be Providence, Rhode Island: A city that has grown and changed immensely since last hosting CNU in 2006. The evolution of downtown and its surrounding neighborhoods, the transformation of the 195 corridor, the reclamation of street space for

pedestrians and bikes, and innovative techniques to protect the city from coastal flooding will all be on display.

CNU provides a Congress Focus for each of our annual gatherings - an underlying problem space that connects the content of the program and the context of our location to an unrealized portion of the vision of the Charter. New Urbanists stand for the restoration of existing urban centers and towns within coherent metropolitan regions, the reconfiguration of sprawling suburbs into communities of real neighborhoods and diverse districts, the conservation of natural environments, and the preservation of our built legacy. Because CNU 33 will look at the issues, innovations, and interplay across the New England region, the Focus of this Congress will be examining how *a coherent metropolitan region* can support and sustain resilient, affordable communities.

### **The Vision of a Coherent Metropolitan Region: The Focus in Action**

The Lexicon of the New Urbanism describes the *metropolis* as an urbanized region with a variety of urban contexts - from the downtown core to rural communities. The *metropolitan region* is a core component of the Charter's vision for New Urbanism, which recognizes that the metropolitan region consists of a number of interconnected pieces that must be considered as a part of a whole in order to deliver the benefits of well-functioning urbanism to all its residents. As New Urbanists, we know that to achieve *complete communities* our vision must include *every context within the transect* and that each part must function together - that the natural geographic boundaries, the centers of towns and villages, the large economic powerhouse cities, and the rural landscape - they each have a role to play in the coherent, functional urban scale of the metropolitan region. CNU 33 New England at Providence allows us to explore the concept of the coherent region - and dive into the ways a regional approach impacts and improves conversations on climate, housing, and more.

#### **CNU 33 Focus and our Community of Practice:**

- Urban designers and planners will have the opportunity to engage with every scale of urban intensity, and explore both timeless historical towns and neighborhoods as well as contemporary examples of both the earliest and more recent successful New Urbanism built in this country.
- Architects and developers will share their most innovative strategies for improving the ways urban development integrates into contextual surroundings, supporting the work-from-home lifestyles and work-life balances that our post-pandemic world more fully embraces.
- Both transportation and community development champions will have opportunities to connect their respective areas of impact, establishing new methods for understanding the relationship between mobility and opportunity, and encouraging innovative ways of breaking down barriers.
- Policy reform advocates will collaborate on regulatory solutions that de-silo decision-making and coordinate strategic outcomes across local, county, state, and federal regimes, from the central metropolis to the surrounding cities and small towns to the natural wilderness that lies beyond.

- Those focused on implementation will explore systemic solutions that increase livability in ways that reduce overcrowding and reinforce well-being for every member of society, from the unhoused to the housing-vulnerable to the workforce to those without existing housing burden.

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### Key Questions that will be addressed at CNU 33 New England:

In what ways can a **regional approach to the housing crisis** spur innovation? How can a well-functioning region support additional housing (and housing types) that **increases density and improves the accessibility of housing choices** within existing urban areas?

How can New Urbanists' **design strategies that expand access to attainable housing**, and support shared prosperity across metropolitan regions and throughout the country as a result?

In what ways have New Urbanists embraced **the role of the region in implementing our vision**, and how can we **better integrate regional coherence and connectivity** into our methodologies, our priorities, our understandings, and our practices?

The fallout from intensifying storms, rising sea levels, and droughts are being experienced by communities across New England. **How can we adapt, coordinate across municipalities, and build a hopeful vision for a climate resilient future?**

What systems have **withstood the test of time and evolved along with society**, from timeless methods of building to interconnected networks of movement to **rural-to-urban relationships**? How can we improve the modern movement of goods and people across the metropolitan region, improve cooperation between agencies, and **ensure well-designed cities and towns aren't contributing to additional auto-dependence**?

How can New Urbanists engage with our environmental, social, economic, and cultural allies to **inform urban adaptation** in ways that will meaningfully **accelerate resilience to climate change**?

What **connections have been lost to the lure of modernity**, and should be revitalized to more **comprehensively support the health, wealth, and well-being of all members of the community**?

What systems have not yet been created that could **help communities thrive**, and how can the many **stakeholders of the metropolis collaborate on a network of policies** that are supportive?

What can we **understand of the unique pressures faced by municipalities** in solving the multitude of crises we face? How can we **learn from stories of collaboration**, reduce silos, and **reimagine new ways of working together**?

In what ways can the **hope of a coherent metropolitan region lessen the fear** that can come with change, and **support the systemic evolution** needed for the intersectional urban crises we face?

How can a **regional approach to planning improve our capacity to protect rural and agricultural lands**, in the face of expanding, shifting, and migrating populations?

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## **Submitting A Session Proposal**

The following are the session types that we are requesting be submitted through the portal:

### **Educational Sessions**

Formerly known as “classes” or “core courses”, Educational Sessions provide the backbone of Congress learning opportunities. They are designed to teach foundational concepts to attendees and can be introductory, intermediate, or master-class level examinations of core New Urbanist principles and practice. Educational Sessions provide an opportunity for presenters to share knowledge with attendees, and require that attendees receive a document with key points and resources in addition to the powerpoint presentation after attending.

Information Required:

1. Main speaker contact information and expertise
2. Session title
3. Session description (250 words or less)
4. Additional speakers contact information and expertise (if applicable) - 3 speakers max
5. Session level (introductory, intermediate, advanced)
6. What principle is being examined?
7. Proposed learning objectives; four (4) minimum
8. Relevance to the Congress Focus (optional)

### **Meetings**

Meetings are an opportunity for attendees to gather and advance New Urbanist discourse on a certain topic. The main activity in a meeting is collaborative discussion, with the outcome being an advanced or more nuanced understanding of the topic. Examples include coalition building for an advocacy platform, a discussion on the agenda of a caucus or affiliate, or a focused discussion on a specific area of New Urbanist practice.

Information Required:

1. Meeting Facilitator contact information and expertise

2. Meeting title
3. Meeting objective (1-2 sentences)
4. Meeting description (250 words or less)
5. Proposed learning objectives; four (4) minimum
6. Additional “meeting hosts” if applicable

### **Project Showcase**

Submit a single (or themed group of) projects that aim to set an example for attendees. Project Showcase sessions can include critiques, practical analysis, lessons-learned, demonstrations of success or failures, the disconnect between the plans and reality of a project, or project outcomes.

#### Information Required:

1. Main speaker contact information and expertise
2. Single project or group of projects?
3. Single project: Title, location
4. Single project: Additional speakers and expertise (if needed)
5. Group of projects: Titles, location for all projects
6. Group of projects: Additional speakers and expertise (if needed)
7. What will attendees learn about from the project(s)?

### **Implementation Session**

To help expand the body of built examples and adopted policies that make up the practice of New Urbanism, implementation Sessions are designed to provide attendees with a demonstration of the effective implementation of a policy, strategy, or design technique used in achieving our shared vision.

#### Information Required:

1. Main speaker contact information and expertise
2. Session title
3. Session description (250 words or less)
4. What technique or policy is being examined?
5. Additional speakers contact information and expertise (if applicable)
6. Proposed learning objectives; four (4) minimum
7. Relevance to the Congress Focus (optional)

*We are seeking ideals for Main Stage Presentations, Workshops, and Short Format presentations outside of this call. Information on this will be made available at [cnu.org/cnu33/program](http://cnu.org/cnu33/program).*